2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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for treatment in other ways. Some are fried immediately, but the Bella Coola think they lack flavour, although most white men regard them as delicious. Many hundreds are dried for winter use in one of the following methods:

(A) Cedar-sticks, each about three feet in length, are split from the solid stem and smoothed down to a diameter of about one-half inch. One of these is passed through the gills and mouth of one fish after another until the rod is filled with a row of olachen, their tails hanging downwards. Dozens of these sticks are suspended horizontally over the central fire in a house, or, in brilliant sunshine, hung in the open. When dried to a certain extent, they are stored in the upper parts of the houses where the process continues whenever a fire is lit. When so treated they keep almost indefinitely.

(B) Narrow strips, each four to five feet in length, of flexible cedar-bark, are prepared by the women. The fisherman takes the ends of two of these, ties one around a fish's head, and the other around its tail. Another olachen is tied parallel to the first, and then others, until the two cords are supporting thirty to forty fish, each separated by about one inch. The middle of the strings is laid across a horizontal bar above a fire or in the open, and the process of drying continues as in the last method. The fish not infrequently catch fire if a large blaze is built up in a house, so careful people remove their olachen before a feast or other celebration.

Though dried olachen provide a useful article for winter diet, the fish are chiefly valued for their grease, *sluk*[1], which is used as a condiment with all kinds of berries. It is sometimes extracted from the fresh fish, but the Bella Coola consider this to be tasteless and prefer to wait until the olachen have remained in the pits for ten days to two weeks. Warm weather hastens the process, but in any case nothing is done until the disgusting smell has penetrated for miles, proving that putrefaction is well advanced. In former times, all boiling was done with hot stones, but at present boxes with iron bottoms are used as kettles. These are of various shapes and sizes, an average being, perhaps, four feet long, three feet wide, and eighteen inches deep. These are set on fireplaces which vary according to the ingenuity of the refiner. Some are excavated in the river bank, lined with stones set in clay, and fitted at the inner end with an old stovepipe to provide draught for the miniature furnace. The box-kettle is placed on the ground over the excavation and the cook pours in water. Then his wife, children, and friends bring the putrid fish, which they ladle in until only a few inches of water are visible. A slow fire is built beneath, and, as the mixture begins to boil, the cook stirs it with a five-foot stick having a slightly flattened blade. Presently the grease begins to rise to the surface whence it is skimmed off and placed in recep-

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tacles; metal coal-oil cans are found convenient for this purpose and have almost replaced watertight boxes. After repeated stirrings and skimmings, all that remains is a mass of putrid flesh, bearing no resemblance whatever to the fish from which it came. The Kitlobe are said to compress this into cakes for eating, but the Bella Coola throw it away. Some cooks bail out the dregs by hand, but many of the box-kettles have a bung-hole at the bottom which, when opened, allows the semi-liquid remains to flow out into a rough trough leading to the river. As soon as one batch of olachen has thus been disposed of, another is boiled and refined in the same way. The grease keeps indefinitely and is a useful article of barter with the Carriers as well as a staple of Bella Coola diet. Although the preparation removes much of its offensive odour, olachen grease has an unpleasant taste to the white man.

During the boiling, all other activities are suspended and the people spend practically all their time on the river bank. If the fish are allowed to rot too long, much of the grease is lost, so men, women, and children are pressed into service to make the most of the short period. The men rise at dawn to start the fires on the bank, the women and children follow with food, and for several days the whole village camps, as if on a picnic, amid an indescribably foul smell that almost sickens anyone passing within hundreds of yards. There are tasks for everyone; the fish must be carried from the pits to the furnaces, wood must be brought, the fires stoked, the kettles stirred, the grease carried away, the fireplaces repaired, food cooked, and a hundred other chores. It is a scene of great activity, carried on with good humour and merriment, for the Bella Coola realize that they are storing up luxuries for the following winter. Even the dogs seem to share the general excitement, and do not disdain to eat the dregs from the kettles, which, when emptied into the river, attract numerous trout and gulls, to the joy of small boys with hunting desires.

BELLA COOLA CANOES

Although travel and transport by water is still as vital to the Bella Coola as it was to their fathers, the motor-boat is fast replacing the canoe, and the science of manufacturing their own craft is being lost. In former times several types were constructed, but only one of these is still employed —the spoon canoe, *sā'ōa*, used on rivers (see Plate 21). These vary from twenty to thirty feet or more in length, and are about four feet wide; they are without keels, and there is no difference between the bow and stern. Although one man can handle such a craft in smooth water, at least two are required for a journey of any length, and four is the usual crew. The captain, who is either the best waterman or the one most familiar with the route, stands in the stern, the second in command in